



108

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PERSONALITIES*

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Prof Dr S Ramalingam

1466 <::><::><::> 29 Jun 1520

MOCTEZUMA II

HISTORY CRUNCH www.historycrunch.com/moctezuma-ii/

 **BORN** 1466
AZTEC EMPIRE

 **DIED** JUNE 29, 1520
TENOCHTITLAN

 **KNOWN FOR** EMPEROR OF THE AZTEC DURING THE SPANISH CONQUEST

 **AZTEC EMPIRE** 1502
BECAME RULER OF TENOCHTITLAN
'HUEY TLATOANI' OR 'GREAT SPEAKER'

 He ruled over the Aztec Empire until 1520, when Spanish Conquistadors led by Hernan Cortes conquered it.

"The Great [Moctezuma] was about forty years old, of good height, well proportioned, spare and slight, and not very dark, though of the usual Indian complexion. He did not wear his hair long but just over his ears, and he had a short black beard, well-shaped and thin. His face was rather long and cheerful, he had fine eyes, and in his appearance and manner could express geniality or, when necessary, a serious composure."
Bernal Díaz del Castillo, 'True History of the Conquest of New Spain', 1576.

 **CORTES & THE SPANISH**
ARRIVED IN AZTEC TERRITORY IN 1519
CAPTURED & IMPRISONED
MOCTEZUMA II
AZTEC EMPEROR

 **DIED IN UNKNOWN CIRCUMSTANCES**

 **THE DEATH OF MOCTEZUMA II**
FROM THE FLORENTINE CODEX



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C. 1466 / 1471



29 Jun 1520

Moctezuma II



Late 17th-century portrait attributed to Antonio Rodríguez

- [Hueyi Tlatoani](#) of the [Aztec Empire](#)
 - [Tlatoani of Tenochtitlan](#)

Reign 1502/1503–1520

[Coronation](#) 1502/1503

Predecessor [Ahuizotl](#)

Successor [Cuauhtemoc](#)

King consort of [Ecatepec](#)

Tenure 16th century–1520

Born c. 1471

Died 29 June 1520 (aged 48–49)
[Tenochtitlan](#), [Mexico](#)

Consort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teotlalco • Tlalpalizquixochtzin
<u>Issue</u> <u>Among</u> <u>others</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isabel Moctezuma • Pedro Moctezuma • Francisca de Moctezuma • Mariana Leonor Moctezuma • Chimalpopoca • Tlaltecatzin
Father	Axayacatl
Mother	Xochicueyetl

Moctezuma Xocoyotzin (c.1466 - 29 June 1520), retroactively referred to in European sources as **Moctezuma II**, was the ninth [emperor](#) of the [Aztec Empire](#) (also known as the [Mexico Empire](#)), reigning from 1502 or 1503 to 1520. Through his marriage with Queen [Tlalpalizquixochtzin](#) of [Ecatepec](#), one of his two wives, he was also the [king consort](#) of that [altepetl](#).

The first contact between the indigenous civilizations of [Mesoamerica](#) and Europeans took place during his reign. He was killed during the initial stages of the [Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire](#) when [Hernán Cortés](#), the Spanish [conquistador](#), and his men seized the [Aztec](#) capital of [Tenochtitlan](#). During his reign, the Aztec Empire reached its greatest size. Through warfare, Moctezuma expanded the territory as far south as [Xoconosco](#) in [Chiapas](#) and the [Isthmus of Tehuantepec](#), and incorporated the [Zapotec](#) and [Yopi people](#) into the empire. He changed the previous [meritocratic](#) system of social hierarchy and widened the divide between [pipiltin](#) (nobles) and [macehualtin](#) (commoners) by prohibiting commoners from working in the royal palaces.

Though two other Aztec rulers succeeded Moctezuma after his death, their reigns were short-lived and the empire quickly collapsed under them. Historical portrayals of Moctezuma have mostly been colored by his role as ruler of a defeated nation, and many sources have described him as weak-willed, superstitious, and indecisive. However, depictions of his person among his contemporaries are divided; some depict him as one of the greatest leaders Mexico had, a great conqueror who tried his best to maintain his nation together at times of crisis,^[5] while others depict him as a tyrant who wanted to take absolute control over the whole empire.^[6] Accounts of how he died and who were the perpetrators (Spaniards or natives) differ. His story remains one of the most well-known conquest narratives from the history of European

contact with Native Americans, and he has been mentioned or portrayed in numerous works of historical fiction and popular culture.

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[A] Moctezuma River

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moctezuma_River

The **Moctezuma River** (Río Moctezuma) is a river in [Mexico](#) that drains the eastern side of the [Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt](#) (Sierra Nevada). It is a tributary of the [Pánuco River](#) and flows through the Mexican states of [Hidalgo](#), [Querétaro](#), and [San Luis Potosí](#).



Course

The Motezuma arises in the Zimapán Dam, this reservoir is formed by the [Tula](#) and [San Juan](#) rivers which join in the reservoir to form the Moctezuma River later downstream of the dam. The [Zimapán Dam](#), is a hydroelectric dam about 15 km southwest of the town of [Zimapán](#). At [Tamazunchale](#) it receives the [Amajac River](#). Below the town of [Tanquián de Escobedo](#) it forms the border between the states of San Luis Potosí and Veracruz. It receives the Tempopal River at [El Higo](#). It ends at its confluence with the Tamuín River (Tampaón River) where together they form the Pánuco River.

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[B] Montezuma, Costa Rica

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montezuma,_Costa_Rica

Montezuma is a town in [Puntarenas Province](#), [Costa Rica](#) which began as a remote [fishing village](#) and has gained popularity since the 1980s among [tourists](#) on a budget.

Montezuma is located near the southern tip of the [Nicoya Peninsula](#), 41 km (25 mi) southwest of [Paquera](#) and 8 km (5 mi) south of the town of [Cóbano](#). Most services are in Cóbano. The nearest airport is located in Tambor.

The town features a mix of residents and foreign backpackers and eco-tourists who come for the beaches, rivers, and scenic waterfalls surrounding the village. The nearby [Cabo Blanco Nature Reserve](#) draws a large number of visitors to the area.



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[C] Montezuma, Iowa



Montezuma is a city and the [county seat](#) of [Poweshiek County, Iowa](#), United States. The population was 1,442 at the time of the [2020 census](#).

Geography

Montezuma's longitude and latitude coordinates in decimal form are 41.584737, -92.525258.

According to the [United States Census Bureau](#), the city has a total area of 2.49 square miles (6.45 km²), of which 2.48 square miles (6.42 km²) is land and 0.01 square miles (0.03 km²) is water.

History

Montezuma was first established in 1848, when local veterans of the [Mexican–American War](#) named the city after [Moctezuma II](#), the second to last [Aztec](#) emperor of Mexico. Once a hub of regional railroad transport, Montezuma has continued to evolve and grow in a variety of ways. Montezuma was also a major stop on the stagecoach line between [Iowa City](#) and [Des Moines](#) on the original [Diamond Trail](#).

Located on the southwest corner of Montezuma's square is the Poweshiek County Historical and Genealogical Society, located in the historic Carnegie library. Housed in the former Poweshiek County Jail is the Poweshiek County History Museum.

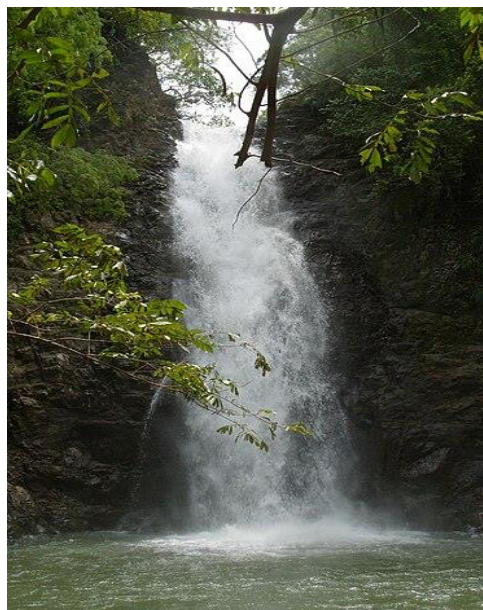
The Scott Township School No. 7, also known as the Fitzsimmons School was moved from the original country landscape to the campus of the Poweshiek County Historical Society.

During the summer of 1934, Pentecostal evangelist Morris Plotts held tent revivals throughout south central Iowa, establishing churches in Oskaloosa, New Sharon, Grinnell, Montezuma, and Lynnvile. While in Montezuma, Plotts was cited with public disturbance and jailed. He continued to minister from his cell and revival broke out in the jail. Plotts' six-month sentence was suspended for good behavior.

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[\[D\] Montezuma Falls](#)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montezuma_Falls



The **Montezuma Falls** (formerly Osbourne Falls), a [horsetail waterfall](#) on a minor tributary to the [Pieman River](#), is located on the [West Coast Range](#) of [Tasmania](#), Australia.

Naming

The falls draws its name from [Montezuma](#) (1466–1520), an [Aztec](#) emperor of Mexico. A mining company called the Montezuma Silver Mining Company, formed in 1891, held leases in the area surrounding the falls.

Location and features

The Montezuma Falls are situated north-east of [Zeehan](#), near the village of [Rosebery](#), accessible via the [Murchison Highway](#). The falls commence at an elevation of 449 metres (1,473 ft) [above sea level](#) and descend in the range of 103–110 metres (338–361 ft), making the falls one of the highest in Tasmania.

The 8-kilometre (5.0 mi) three-hour return [walking track](#) from the trackhead at the foot of [Mount Read](#) near [Williamsford](#).

Railway



North East Dundas Tramway at Montezuma Falls

The track follows much of the route of the former 2-foot (61 cm) narrow gauge [North East Dundas Tramway](#) and earlier views of the falls include the passing railway line.

The falls location was a stopping point on the North East Dundas tram.

The proximity of the line to the falls was described in 1926:

This little railway is a "show" line of the highest order, for it dives quickly amongst the mountains, brushing the fringe of immense forests, and at one point giving a near view, of the hand- some Montezuma Falls-so near that the spray actually dashes at times against the carriage win- dows. From Williamsford one can take a motor for the five miles to Rosebery.

The railway alignment, after closing of the operation, was used for trips to view the falls.

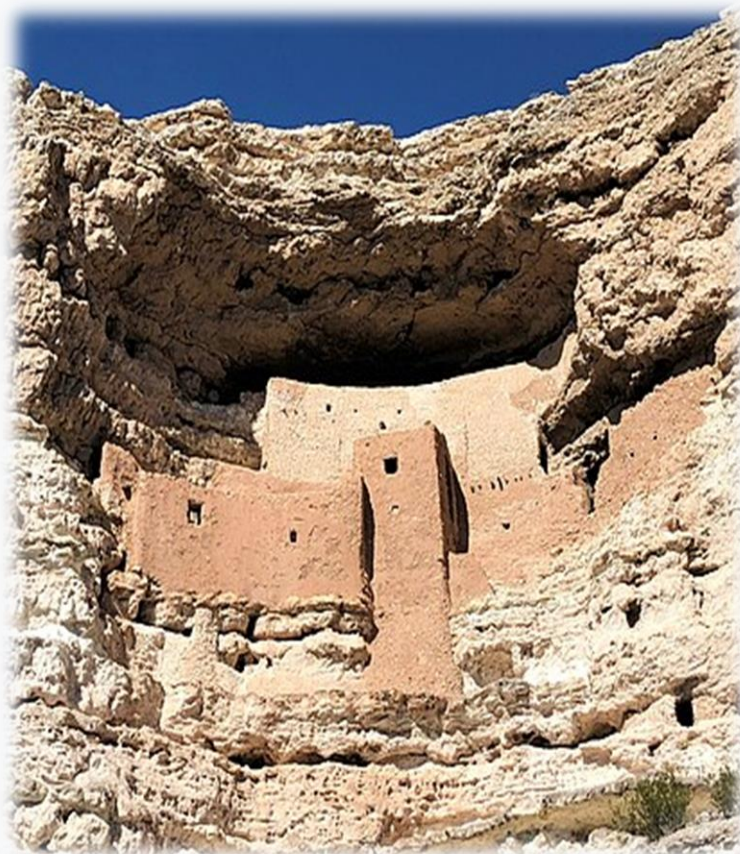
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Montezuma Castle National Monument

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montezuma_Castle_National_Monument

Montezuma Castle National Monument

IUCN category III (natural monument or feature)



(2021)



Show map of Arizona:Show map of the United States:Show all

Location [Yavapai County, Arizona](#), United States

Nearest city [Camp Verde, Arizona](#)

Coordinates  [34°36'40"N 111°50'12"W](#)

Area 859.27 acres (347.73 ha)

Created December 8, 1906

Visitors 390,151 (in 2018)

Governing body [National Park Service](#)

Website [Montezuma Castle National Monument](#)

[U.S. National Register of Historic Places](#)

Designated October 15, 1966

Reference no. 66000082

Montezuma Castle National Monument protects a set of well-preserved dwellings located in [Camp Verde, Arizona](#), which were built and used by the [Sinagua](#) people, a [pre-Columbian](#) culture closely related to the [Hohokam](#) and other [indigenous peoples of the southwestern United States](#), between approximately AD 1100 and 1425. The main structure comprises five stories and about 20 rooms and was built over the course of three centuries.

Several [Hopi](#) clans and [Yavapai](#) communities trace their ancestries to early immigrants from the Montezuma Castle/Beaver Creek area. Archaeological evidence proves that the [Hohokam](#) and [Hakataya](#) settled around or in the [Verde Valley](#). Clan members periodically return to these ancestral homes for religious ceremonies.

Etymology

Neither part of the monument's name is correct. When European-Americans first observed the ruins in the 1860s, by then long-abandoned, they named them for the famous [Aztec](#) emperor [Montezuma](#) in the mistaken belief that he had been connected to their construction (see also [Montezuma mythology](#)). Having no connections to the [Aztecs](#), the Montezuma Castle was given that name due to the fact that the public had this image of the [Aztecs](#) creating any archaeological site. In fact, the dwelling was abandoned more than 40 years before Montezuma was born, and was not a "castle" in the traditional sense, but instead functioned more like a "prehistoric high rise apartment complex".

Cliff dwelling

Montezuma Castle is situated about 90 feet (27 m) up a sheer limestone cliff, facing the adjacent Beaver Creek, which drains into the perennial [Verde River](#) just north of [Camp Verde](#). It is one of the best-preserved cliff dwellings in North America, in part because of its ideal placement in a natural alcove that protects it from exposure to the elements. The precariousness of the dwelling's location and its immense scale of floor space across five stories suggest that the Sinagua were daring builders and skilled engineers. Access into the structure was most likely permitted by a series of portable ladders, which made it difficult for enemy tribes to penetrate the natural defense of the vertical barrier.



A view of Montezuma Castle from 1887

Perhaps the main reason the Sinagua chose to build the Castle so far above the ground, however, was to escape the threat of natural disaster in the form of the annual flooding of Beaver Creek. During the summer [monsoon season](#), the creek frequently breached its banks, inundating the floodplain with water. The Sinagua recognized the importance of these floods to their agriculture, but likely also the potential destruction they presented to any structures built in the floodplain. Their solution was to build a permanent structure in the high recess afforded by the limestone cliff.

The walls of Montezuma Castle are examples of early stone-and-mortar masonry, constructed almost entirely from chunks of limestone found at the base of the cliff, as well as mud and/or clay from the creek bottom. The ceilings of the rooms also incorporated sectioned timbers as a kind of roof thatching, obtained primarily from the [Arizona sycamore](#), a large hardwood tree native to the Verde Valley.

History

Evidence of permanent dwellings like those at Montezuma Castle begins to appear in the archaeological record of Arizona's [Verde Valley](#) about 1050 AD. The first distinctly Sinagua culture may have occupied the region as early as 700 AD.



A diorama of what the castle would have looked like when it was in use



Northern Arizona, Montezuma's Castle, photo by Earl K. Foreman (1924)

The area was briefly abandoned due to the eruption of [Sunset Crater Volcano](#), about 60 miles (97 km) to the north, in the mid-11th century. Although the short-term impact may have been destructive, nutrient-rich sediment deposited by the volcano may have aided more expansive agriculture in later decades. During the interim, the Sinagua lived in the surrounding highlands and sustained themselves on [small-scale agriculture](#) dependent on rain. After 1125, the [Sinagua](#) resettled the [Verde Valley](#), using the reliable watershed of the Verde River alongside irrigation systems left by previous inhabitants, perhaps including Hohokam peoples, to support more widespread farming.

The region's population likely peaked around 1300 AD, with the Castle housing between 30 and 50 people in at least 20 rooms. Radiocarbon dates from multiple construction beams show that the cliff dwelling was probably constructed in the middle 1100s AD with remodeling and additions in the last decades of the 1200s. A neighboring segment of the same cliff wall suggests there was an even larger dwelling ("Castle A") around the same time, of which only the stone foundations have survived. Its discovery in 1933 revealed many Sinagua artifacts and greatly increased understanding of their way of life.

The latest estimated date of occupation for any Sinagua site comes from Montezuma Castle, around 1425 AD. After this, the Sinagua people apparently abandoned their permanent settlements and migrated elsewhere, as did other cultural groups in the southwestern United States around that time. The reasons for abandonment are unclear, but possibilities include drought, [resource depletion](#), and clashes with the newly arrived Yavapai people. Due to the very little human contact since abandonment, Montezuma Castle was well preserved. It was heavily looted in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, though other Sinagua sites have remained more or less intact. Because of the rise in settlers, tourists and industries in or surrounding Montezuma Castle, the monument and even [Verde Valley](#) have been threats to the preservation of Montezuma Castle.



Montezuma Castle National Monument Showing Levels and Main Castle



Montezuma Castle c.1893–1900

Plants and animals

Due to the lack of basic knowledge on the natural resources of the national parks, the [National Park Service](#) created a program in order to record and identify any changes in the environment and its inhabitants. An inventory of plants and animals at Montezuma Castle was taken between 1991 and 1994 by researchers from [Northern Arizona University](#) and the [United States Geological Survey](#). According to the [United States Geological Survey](#), about 784 species were recorded at Montezuma Castle National Monument, including plants, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Only 11% of the species were non-native. Common species include bats, snakes, turtles, lizards, frogs, foxes, owls and mice.

Federal protection

The monument itself encloses 860 acres near the geographic center of Arizona and the intersection of the [Colorado Plateau](#) and [Basin and Range](#) physiographic provinces.

The dwellings and the surrounding area were declared a [U.S. National Monument](#) on December 8, 1906 as a result of the [American Antiquities Act](#), signed earlier that year. It is one of the four original sites designated National Monuments by President [Theodore Roosevelt](#). Montezuma Castle was added to the [National Register of Historic Places](#) on October 15, 1966.

It is an easy monument to visit, just a short distance off [Interstate 17](#), at exit 289. There is a $\frac{1}{3}$ mile (0.54 km) paved trail starting at the visitor center that follows the base of the cliff containing the ruins. Access to the interior of the ruins has not been allowed since 1951 due to concerns about visitor safety and damage to the dwelling. About 400,000 tourists visit the site each year. The park is open from 8am to 5pm every day of the year, except for Christmas Day.

The visitor center includes a museum about the Sinagua culture and the tools they used to build the dwellings. The museum houses many artifacts, such as stone tools, [metates](#) used for grinding corn, bone needles, and ornaments of shell and

gemstone, which prove that the Sinagua were fine artisans as well as prolific traders. There is also a Park Store operated by Western National Parks Association.



10 Facts About Moctezuma II

Last True Aztec Emperor

<https://www.historyhit.com/facts-about-moctezuma-ii/>



Moctezuma II in the Ramírez Codex (Tovar manuscript) based on an earlier work possibly compiled by Christianized Aztecs shortly after the conquest.

Moctezuma II was one of the final rulers of the Aztec empire and its capital city Tenochtitlan. He ruled prior to its destruction around 1521 AD at the hands of the Conquistadors, their Indigenous allies, and the effect of disease spread by the European invaders.

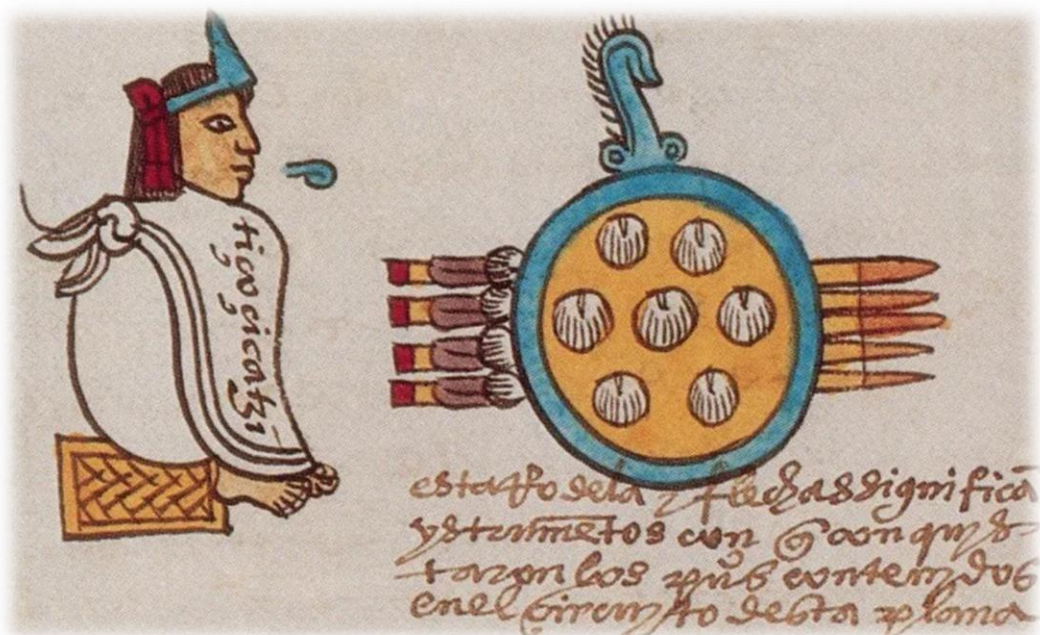
The most famous of Aztec emperors, Moctezuma is seen as a symbol of resistance against the Spanish and his name was invoked during several rebellions centuries later. Yet according to a Spanish source, Moctezuma was killed by a group of rebels amongst his own people who were angry at his failure to deal with the invading army.

Here are 10 facts about Moctezuma

1. He was something of a family man

Moctezuma could give the King of [Siam](#) a run for his money when it came to fathering children. Known for his countless wives and concubines, a Spanish chronicler claims he may have sired over 100 children.

Of his female partners only two women held the position of queen, in particular his favourite and most highly ranked consort, Teotiaico. She was a Nahua princess of Ecatepec and the Aztec Queen of Tenochtitlan. Not all the emperor's children were considered equal in nobility and inheritance rights. This depended on the status of their mothers, many of whom were without noble family connections.



Moctezuma II in the Codex Mendoza.

2. He doubled the size of the Aztec Empire

Despite portrayals of Moctezuma as indecisive, vain and superstitious, he doubled the size of the [Aztec Empire](#). By the time he became king in 1502, Aztec influence spread from Mexico into Nicaragua and Honduras. His name translates as 'Angry Like A Lord'. This reflects his importance at the time as well as the fact that he was the fully independent ruler of the Aztec Empire until its collapse in the 16th century.

3. He was a good administrator

Moctezuma had a talent as an administrator. He set up 38 provincial divisions in order to centralize the empire. Part of his plans to maintain order and secure revenues was to send out bureaucrats accompanied by a military presence to make certain that tax was being paid by the citizens and that national laws were being upheld.

This skill at bookkeeping at a grand scale and an apparent administrative zeal contrast with his image as a warrior who secured territories through warfare.

4. Little tangible evidence documents his rule

Very little is known about Emperor Moctezuma or what it was like to rule over the Aztec kingdom. The Spanish Conquistadors' destruction of the grand city Tenochtitlan, as well as its artefacts and art, left little information about the Aztec ruler for posterity. Born into Aztec royalty, Moctezuma's nearly two decades of leadership saw him expand his empire's region until it dominated modern day Mexico.

When the Spanish explorers arrived on South American shores led by the Conquistadors' leader Hernan Cortes, Moctezuma could do little but watch his world crumble. Though he was followed by two successors, he was the last of the Aztec emperors with widespread authority.

5. He was part of an Aztec royal family

Moctezuma's father was the Aztec ruler Axayacatl and his uncle was the emperor Ahuitzotl. Nothing is known about what Moctezuma was like as a child or a young man, nor of his relationships with family members.

What is known is that he came of age during a time of transformation and that as the prince of Axayacatl he was pampered and feted as divine. Living in the most opulent of palaces, Moctezuma II received the best education, learning the disciplines of warfare and politics for his future as emperor.

6. He ruled several million people

At its height, the Aztec Empire incorporated between 6 to 12 million people, around 500 cities and stretched from modern central Mexico to the fringes of modern Guatemala. During the reign of Moctezuma's father Axayacatl, the Aztec empire had only been in existence for half a century.

The Aztecs encompassed multiple ethnic groups of central Mexico and proliferated as a culture in the 13th and 14th centuries. The Aztec civilisation emerged from violent competition between numerous city-states. As the Aztecs excelled in warfare, by 1325 AD they had established a seat of power in the great city of Tenochtitlan, upon an island in the Valley of Mexico.

7. He inherited his throne from his uncle

In 1479, when Montezuma was 10 years old, his father Axatacatl saw his entire army wiped out by the rival Purepecha Empire. Shortly afterwards he succumbed to a wasting disease, possibly the result of assassination by poisoning. After a short reign by Tizoc, Moctezuma's uncle Ahuitzotl took over as ruler in 1486 and ushered in what is recognised as the Aztec golden age.

During this time, the Aztecs continued to conquer other regions. One of the first things Ahuitzotl did to celebrate his new reign was to **sacrifice as many as 20,000 prisoners** on top of the gargantuan Templo Mayor pyramid in a

brutal ritual. (The Spanish chronicler Fray Diego Duran puts the number at a staggering, and improbable, 80,000.)

8. He made up for his father's failures

While Montezuma's father Axatacatl was generally an effective warrior, a major defeat by the Tarascans in 1476 damaged his reputation. His son, on the other hand, was noted not only for his skills in fighting but also in diplomacy. Perhaps intent on distancing himself from his father's failures, he conquered more land than any other Aztec in history.

9. He welcomed Cortés to Tenochtitlan

After a series of confrontations and negotiations, the leader of the Spanish conquistadors Hernan Cortés was welcomed to Tenochtitlan. Following a frosty encounter, Cortés claimed to have captured Moctezuma, but this may have taken place later. A popular historical tradition has long ascribed to the Aztecs the belief that the white-bearded Cortés was the embodiment of the deity [Quetzalcoatl](#), which led the wretched and omen-obsessed Aztecs to look towards the conquistadors as if they were gods.

However, the story seems to originate in the writings of Francisco López de Gómara, who never visited Mexico but was a secretary to the retired Cortés. Historian Camilla Townsend, author of *Fifth Sun: A New History of the Aztecs*, writes that there is "little evidence that indigenous people ever seriously believed the newcomers were gods, and there is no meaningful evidence that any story about Quetzalcoatl's returning from the east ever existed before the conquest."

Returning to the city later with reinforcements and superior technology, Cortes eventually [conquered the great city of Tenochtitlan](#) and its people through violence.

10. The cause of his death is uncertain

The death of Moctezuma was attributed by Spanish sources to an angry mob in the city of Tenochtitlan, who were frustrated at the failure of the

emperor to defeat the invaders. According to this story, a cowardly Moctezuma attempted to evade his subjects, who threw rocks and spears at him, wounding him. The Spanish returned him to the palace, where he died.

On the other hand, he may have been murdered while in Spanish captivity. In the 16th century Florentine Codex, Moctezuma's death is attributed to the Spaniards, who cast his body from the palace.



Moctezuma II

The Last Great Emperor of the Aztec Empire

<https://bestdiplomats.org/moctezuma-ii/>

The Last Great Emperor of the Aztec Empire, Moctezuma II, also known as Montezuma II and Moteuczoma, is a crucial character in Mesoamerican history. Reigning from 1502 or 1503 to 1520, Moctezuma was born into a family of distinguished emperors, and his accession to the throne marked a turning point in the development of the Aztec civilization.

As the ruler of the Aztec country, Moctezuma implemented laws and policies that permanently altered the organization of the country. During his rule, the complex social structure of the Aztec people and his leadership style interacted dynamically. His rule was characterized by both intimidating challenges and noteworthy accomplishments, providing a subtle insight into Moctezuma's impact on the Aztec realm. What was Moctezuma II's rule like? Why did his rule last so quickly? You will find all that out in this article.

Historical Background

The fascinating story of Moctezuma II's rise from his early years to the height of Aztec authority reveals the complex fabric of his early life. Moctezuma was born into the ruling class and carried on his

forefathers' distinguished leadership history. His strict education during his upbringing equipped him for the heavy duties that befell him as heir to the kingdom.

He was well-educated in theology, science, and art, and demonstrated his dedication to his faith by being appointed a priest in the temple of an Aztec war god. He excelled in multiple Aztec Wars as well. After his uncle died in 1502, Moctezuma ascended to the throne in 1502 and ruled over an empire that comprised five to six million people, centered in modern-day Mexico and encompassing the Mesoamerican region. Because he was more superstitious than his predecessors due to the impact of omens and prophecies, which ultimately turned out to be his primary weakness, he gained notoriety for both his arrogance and his superstition.

Moctezuma increased taxes on merchants and expelled all commoners from his court against the advice of his advisors that such drastic measures would weaken the Empire. From conquered tribes, he demanded the same high tributes. Several expeditions undertaken by his predecessors in 1519 to gather sacrificial victims resulted in rebellions and conflicts with multiple tribes.

Not only was Moctezuma's rise to prominence a result of his ancestry, but it also demonstrated his ability to negotiate the entangled system of Aztec politics. He was able to establish himself as the emperor through diplomatic maneuvers and strategic alliances, but the emperorship came with great responsibility and the duty of preserving the legacy of the Aztec rulers.

Moctezuma demonstrated his tenacity and decisiveness in the heat of power. A leader able to reconcile divergent interests and preserve stability was necessary to meet the challenges of overseeing a large and distinguished empire. In addition to being a personal triumph, Moctezuma's ascent to prominence was a testament to his aptitude for negotiating the dynamic social networks of Aztec culture.

Moctezuma's Rule

Moctezuma II came to power at a crucial point in the history of the Aztec Empire. The empire had a sophisticated social, political, and economic framework and was characterized by its vibrant capital, Tenochtitlan. The Aztecs ruled over neighboring areas with great power, and Moctezuma inherited a vast empire that peaked in terms of

both territory and cultural accomplishments. It is essential to understand the geopolitical environment of the empire under Moctezuma's rule to assess his leadership.

Moctezuma's leadership was distinguished by a delicate balancing act between innovation and tradition. His approach was defined by a combination of strategic practicality and a strong dedication to preserving Aztec principles. Moctezuma sought to increase the empire's exterior influence and domestic stability through the implementation of programs and reforms. His style of governance combined aspects of diplomacy, trade, and military strategy, reflecting his acute awareness of the various populations inside the empire.

The emperor was at the top of the structure-oriented class system that characterized Aztec culture. Being the divine ruler, Moctezuma was regarded as a half-divine character with great authority. The cohesiveness of Aztec society was greatly aided by the emperor's connections with the troops, priests, and members of other social layers. Gaining knowledge of this complex network of connections helps one to understand the forces that shaped Moctezuma's authority.

Moctezuma's reign was marked by both victories and setbacks. Memorable triumphs enhanced the cultural diversity of the empire and featured advances in the arts, architecture, and agriculture. Obstacles like outside threats and internal tension put Moctezuma's leadership to the test. The complex interactions between these successes and setbacks throughout his rule had a long-term effect on the course of the Aztec Empire.

Moctezuma's Interactions with the Spanish Conquistadors

The Spanish voyage and Hernán Cortés' entrance into Mexico were crucial turning points in Moctezuma II's rule. When Cortés and his army touched down on the Yucatán Peninsula in 1519, he set the stage for two worlds to collide. Motivated by the desire for money and conquest, the Spanish set out on a bold journey that would change the course of history in the Americas.

When the Spaniards arrived, Moctezuma became worried that they were either agents or ambassadors sent to represent Huitzilopochtli, the god of the Aztecs, who is said to make a reappearance in the future. Both sides used the Aztec God to justify their actions after the conquest had taken place. The Aztecs may have used Quetzalcoatl as

an excuse to explain the devastating defeat that occurred under Moctezuma's rule. Later, Spanish clerics also stated this superstition, arguing that their arrival had somehow fulfilled an ancient prophecy. When Moctezuma's lavish gifts failed to convince the Spaniards to depart, he invited them into his court at Tenochtitlan.

There was a great deal of tension and miscommunication between Moctezuma and Cortés during their initial meetings. Initially unsure of the Spanish intentions, Moctezuma attempted to negotiate the sensitive diplomatic landscape. Cortés, on the other hand, saw the Spanish crown as a potential source of wealth from Moctezuma's sovereignty. The miscommunications were made worse by the two parties' different languages and cultures, which paved the way for a complicated and changing relationship.

Moctezuma's cautious attitude toward the Spanish was caused by several factors. He first took a diplomatic posture since he was aware of the Spanish military's strength but did not understand their intentions. The emperor's cautious diplomacy originated from his wish to navigate the true nature of the Spanish presence in his domain and prevent conflict. But as things developed, this cautious approach would turn out to be a double-edged sword.

Moctezuma's choices during the Spanish encounter were heavily influenced by religion and prophecies.

The Fall of the Aztec Empire

After seizing the emperor, Cortes was greeted by the Indians as their Savior from Aztec rule, and he took control of the Aztec empire with little resistance. All of Moctezuma's chiefs were called, and he gave them orders to submit to the Spanish and gather taxes for the Spanish king. Cortes took to ruling from behind the throne by enlisting Moctezuma to carry out his intentions. After Cortes and his soldiers were in Tenochtitlan for a few months, a fresh Spanish expedition from Cuba arrived in Mexico intending to reduce Cortez's authority and place one of his lieutenants in charge.

Cortes convinced his fellow Cubans to march with him to the coast. While Cortes was away, there was an incident at Tenochtitlan that led to an Indian siege of the city. The remaining Spaniards were invited to a lavish celebration by the Tenochtitlan Indians. After the festivities, the Spaniards ate, drank, and enjoyed themselves while their hosts

brought out many competing Indian captives and cut out their hearts. This startling display infuriated the Spaniards, who then slaughtered every Indian in the area.

This insult was considered a serious act of blasphemy by the majority of Indians. Upon his return, Cortes discovered his soldiers imprisoned within the palace and on the verge of starvation. The Emperor rejected his request to make supply arrangements. Cortes then gave one of the Aztec chiefs freedoms, telling him to restore food and open the marketplaces. Rather, the chief took over as the revolt's leader, and the capital saw violent combat.

When Cortes eventually persuaded Moctezuma to address his people and give the order to follow the Spaniards, the enraged Indians stoned their imprisoned Emperor, refusing to listen to their leader. In June of 1520, a few days later, Moctezuma passed away. His days as Emperor were gone, though it's unknown if the Spaniards who had no use for him killed him or if the crowd had injured him.

Moctezuma's Legacy

The Aztec Empire was forever changed by Moctezuma II's leadership, which shaped its course during a critical period. His authority was characterized by his ability to juggle the complexities of Aztec civilization, implement policies, and resolve conflicts. To evaluate his leadership, one must look at how his choices affected the stability, cultural advancement, and resilience of the empire to outside influences.

The Aztec civilization was permanently altered by the Spanish conquest. The impact of new religious beliefs, the spread of European diseases, and the disruption of established socio-political structures was significant and long-lasting. Understanding how the clash of two worlds altered the region's cultural, economic, and demographic landscape is essential to evaluating the conquest's aftermath.

The legacy of Moctezuma endures in contemporary Mexican and Aztec consciousness. His status as the final great emperor is remembered in literature, art, and historical accounts. To evaluate Moctezuma's position in modern Mexican and Aztec culture, one must investigate how he is remembered, praised, or criticized. Celebrations, memorials, and customs all frequently reflect his historical significance.

There are several points of view regarding Moctezuma's deeds and choices, from appreciation to disapproval. Whereas European narratives would concentrate on his surrender to the Spanish, indigenous viewpoints might highlight his attempts to negotiate a challenging geopolitical environment. Evaluating these divergent perspectives is crucial to comprehending Moctezuma's historical significance and the subtleties of cultural interpretation.

Conclusion

The life and reign of Moctezuma II, the Last Great Emperor of the Aztec Empire, encapsulates a complicated, fascinating, and profoundly transformative period of history. Moctezuma struggled with the complex dynamics of Aztec civilization from his early years and ascension to power, leaving a lasting impression on the empire.

Moctezuma's interactions with Hernán Cortés' Spanish conquistadors highlight the collision of civilizations that characterized the period even more. Religious predictions and geopolitical complexities drove cultural divergence that accompanied the early misunderstandings, careful diplomacy, and eventual siege of Tenochtitlan.

The tragic end of a once-mighty civilization is symbolized by the collapse of the Aztec Empire, which was brought about by the destruction of Tenochtitlan, the empire's capital, and the unexplained death of Moctezuma. The effects of the Spanish conquest were felt throughout history, changing the region's political, social, and cultural environment in ways that still exist today. To evaluate Moctezuma's legacy, one must carefully consider his leadership style, the long-term effects of the Spanish conquest, and his significance in both modern Mexican and Aztec culture.

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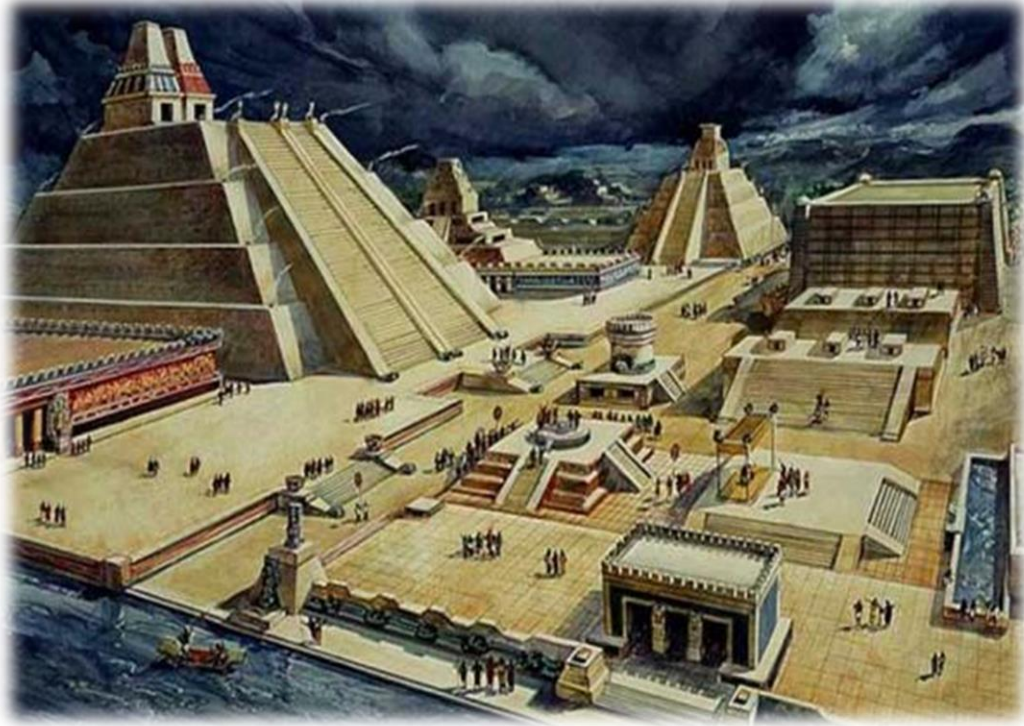
[Kindly visit the Web Link to read the article;](#)

Did Emperor Moctezuma II's head injury and subsequent death hasten the fall of the Aztec nation?



[Author:](#) **Gonzalo Sanchez**

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279734203_Did_Emperor_Moctezuma_II's_head_injury_and_subsequent_death_hasten_the_fall_of_the_Aztec_nation



The great city of Tenochtitlan



Moctezuma presents gifts to Cortez

The capture of Moctezuma. Copper-plate engraving from Van Beecq



Moctezuma II by Daniel del Valle
from the Museo Nacional De Arte, Mexico.

AZTEC EMPEROR MOCTEZUMA II : INFOGRAPHIC

The [Aztec Empire](#) was a dominant society in Central Mexico that developed on the shores of Lake Texcoco. The Aztec established their main city, [Tenochtitlan](#), in 1325 CE and quickly spread throughout the rest of the region. Spanish conquistadors led by [Hernan Cortes](#) conquered the Aztec Empire in 1520. At the time, the Aztec Empire was led by [Moctezuma II](#). Click the links above to read more information about each topic.

MOCTEZUMA II

HISTORY CRUNCH www.historycrunch.com/moctezuma-ii/

BORN 1466
AZTEC EMPIRE

RIP **DIED** JUNE 29, 1520
TENOCHTITLAN

KNOWN FOR EMPEROR OF THE AZTEC DURING THE SPANISH CONQUEST

AZTEC EMPIRE 1502
BECAME RULER OF TENOCHTITLAN
'HUEY TLATOANI' OR 'GREAT SPEAKER'

He ruled over the Aztec Empire until 1520, when Spanish Conquistadors led by Hernan Cortes conquered it.

"The Great [Moctezuma] was about forty years old, of good height, well proportioned, spare and slight, and not very dark, though of the usual Indian complexion. He did not wear his hair long but just over his ears, and he had a short black beard, well-shaped and thin. His face was rather long and cheerful, he had fine eyes, and in his appearance and manner could express geniality or, when necessary, a serious composure."

Bernal Diaz del Castillo, 'True History of the Conquest of New Spain', 1576.

CORTES & THE SPANISH
ARRIVED IN AZTEC TERRITORY IN 1519

CAPTURED & IMPRISONED
MOCTEZUMA II
AZTEC EMPEROR

DIED IN UNKNOWN CIRCUMSTANCES

HERNAN CORTES

THE DEATH OF MOCTEZUMA II FROM THE FLORENTINE CODEX

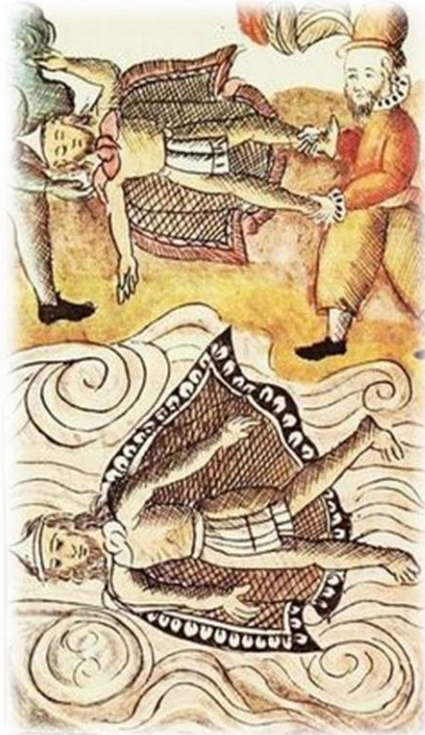
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Hernan Cortés



Moctezuma II captured by Spanish conquistadors.



Death of Moctezuma II from the Florentine Codex.

SPANISH CONQUEST OF The Aztec Empire

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_conquest_of_the_Aztec_Empire

Spanish Conquest of the Aztec Empire

Part of the [Spanish colonization of the Americas](#) and
[Mexican Indian Wars](#)












Conquest of Mexico by [Cortés](#), oil on canvas
[Spanish](#): Conquista de México por Cortés

Date	February 1519 – 13 August 1521 against the Aztec Empire , after 1529 – 17 February 1530 against the Purépecha Empire
Location	Aztec Empire and other indigenous states (modern-day Mexico)
Result	Spanish-Indigenous allied victory
Territorial changes	Annexation of the Aztec Empire , the Purépecha Empire , and others by the Spanish Empire Creation of the Kingdom of New Spain

Belligerents

Habsburg Spain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Columbian Viceroyalty (until 1521) New Spain (from 1521) 	Indigenous allies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confederacy of Tlaxcala Tetzaco Totonacapan Huejotzingo
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Aztec Triple Alliance (1519–1521) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenochtitlan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cholula Tlatelolco Chalco Xochimilco Xaltocan Tlacopan 	Allied city-states: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teotitlan Independent kingdoms and city-states:
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zaachila^a •  Purépecha Empire (1522-1529, since 1533) <p>Support or occasional allies^b:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •  Otomí •  Chalco •  Xochimilco • Mixquic •  Iztapalapa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •  Confederacy of Tlaxcala (1519) •  Purépecha Empire (1522) •  Metztitlan • Tututepec (1522) • Yopitzinco • Colliman (1523) • Xalisco • Guamare Confederacy • Other Chichimecas • Tonallan • Various petty city-states and tribes (map)
	 Governorate of Cuba (1520, see)
<h3>Commanders and leaders</h3>	
<p>Spanish commanders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hernán Cortés • Pedro de Alvarado • Gonzalo de Sandoval • Cristóbal de Olid • Diego de Ordaz • Nuño de Guzmán • Juan de Escalante † <p>Indigenous allies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xicotencatl the Younger ☠ • Xicotencatl the Elder • Maxixcatl • Chichimecatecuhtli • Xicomecoatl of Cempoala • Cosijopii I of Zaachila • Ixtilxochitl II of Texcoco 	<p>Aztec commanders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moctezuma II † • Cuitláhuac † • Cuauhtémoc ☠ • Itzquauhtzin of Tlatelolco † • Cacamatzin of Texcoco † • Coanacoch of Texcoco ☠ • Tetlepanquetzal of Tlacopan ☠
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangaxuan II ☠
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various local rulers and chieftains
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pánfilo de Narváez (WIA) (POW)
<h3>Strength</h3>	
<p>Spaniards (total):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~2,500–3,000 infantry^[3] • 90–100 cavalry • 32 guns • 13 brigantines <p>~80,000–200,000 Tlaxcaltecs</p> <p>~10,000 Totonac (~8,400 followed Cortés from Cempoala) and high number of other indigenous allies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200,000 Mexica-Aztecs • 100,000 Purépecha • Unknown number of other natives • 900 Spaniards at the Battle of Cempoala (1520)

Casualties and losses	
1,800 Spaniards dead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000 killed in battle • 15+ cannons lost 	200,000 Aztecs dead (including civilians) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 war canoes sunk
Tens of thousands of Tlaxcaltecs and indigenous allies dead	Unknown casualties of other natives
	15 Spaniards dead, many wounded at the Battle of Cempoala (1520)
10,500,000 deaths as a result of the conquest (87.5% of the population of the modern day territory of Mexico)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [^] a. Formed an alliance with Pedro de Alvarado against Mixtecos. • [^] b. Primarily military support against Tenochtitlan and joined the siege (1521). 	

The **Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire** was a pivotal event in the history of the Americas, marked by the collision of the [Aztec Triple Alliance](#) and the [Spanish Empire](#). Taking place between 1519 and 1521, this event saw the Spanish [conquistador Hernán Cortés](#), and his small army of European soldiers and numerous indigenous allies, overthrowing one of the most powerful empires in [Mesoamerica](#).

Led by the Aztec ruler [Moctezuma II](#), the Aztec Empire had established dominance over central Mexico through military conquest and intricate alliances. Because the Aztec Empire ruled via [hegemonic](#) control by maintaining local leadership and relying on the psychological perception of Aztec power — backed by military force — the Aztecs normally kept subordinate rulers compliant. This was an inherently unstable system of governance, as this situation could change with any alteration in the [status quo](#). A combination of factors including superior weaponry, strategic alliances with oppressed or otherwise dissatisfied or opportunistic indigenous groups, and the impact of European diseases contributed to the downfall of the short rule of the Aztec civilization.

The invasion of [Tenochtitlán](#), the capital of the Aztec Empire, marked the beginning of Spanish dominance in the region and the establishment of New Spain. This conquest had profound consequences, as it led to the cultural assimilation of the Spanish culture, while also paving the way for the emergence of a new social hierarchy dominated by Spanish conquerors and their descendants.

Significant Events in the conquest of Mesoamerica

Following an earlier expedition to [Yucatán](#) led by [Juan de Grijalva](#) in 1518, Spanish conquistador [Hernándo Cortés](#) led an expedition (*entrada*) to Mexico. The next year, Cortés and his retinue set sail for Mexico.^[9] The Spanish campaign against the Aztec Empire had its final victory on 13 August 1521, when a coalition army of Spanish forces and native [Tlaxcalan](#) warriors led by Cortés and [Xicotencatl](#) the

[Younger](#) captured the emperor [Cuauhtémoc](#) and Tenochtitlan, the capital of the [Aztec Empire](#). The fall of Tenochtitlan marks the beginning of Spanish rule in central Mexico, and they established their capital of [Mexico City](#) on the ruins of Tenochtitlan.

Cortés made alliances with tributary city-states ([altepetl](#)) of the [Aztec Empire](#) as well as their political rivals, particularly the [Tlaxcaltecs](#) and [Tetzcocans](#), a former partner in the Aztec Triple Alliance. Other city-states also joined, including [Cempoala](#) and [Huejotzingo](#) and polities bordering [Lake Texcoco](#), the inland lake system of the [Valley of Mexico](#). Particularly important to the Spanish success was a multilingual (Nahuatl, a Maya dialect, and Spanish) Nahua-speaking woman enslaved by the Mayas, known to the Spanish conquistadors as Doña Marina, and later as [La Malinche](#). After eight months of battles and negotiations, which overcame the diplomatic resistance of the Aztec Emperor [Moctezuma II](#) to his visit, Cortés arrived in [Tenochtitlan](#) on 8 November 1519, where he took up residence with fellow Spaniards and their indigenous allies. When news reached Cortés of the death of several of his men during the Aztec attack on the [Totonacs](#) in [Veracruz](#), Cortés claims that he took Motecuhzoma captive. Capturing the [cacique](#) or indigenous ruler was a standard operating procedure for Spaniards in their expansion in the Caribbean, so capturing Motecuhzoma had considerable precedent but modern scholars are skeptical that Cortés and his countrymen took Motecuhzoma captive at this time. They had great incentive to claim they did, owing to the laws of Spain at this time, but critical analysis of their personal writings suggest Motecuhzoma was not taken captive until a much later date.

When Cortés left Tenochtitlan to return to the coast and deal with the threat of the expedition of [Pánfilo de Narváez](#), Cortés left [Pedro de Alvarado](#) in charge of Tenochtitlan. Cortés left with a small army to the coast with the plan of attacking during the night. After defeating Narváez's fleet, Cortés convinced most of his enemy's crew to go with him by promising great riches. Upon reaching Tenochtitlan, Cortés and the new enlarged force received the message that "the Aztec had risen against the Spanish garrison" during a religious celebration.^[11] Alvarado ordered his army to attack the unarmed crowd; he later claims that the Aztecs had used the celebration to cover up a counterattack. Cortés realized that the defeat was imminent and decided to escape yet, the Aztecs attacked. The Massacre is most known as [La Noche Triste](#) (the sorrowful night) about "400 Spaniards, 4000 native allies and many horses [were killed] before reaching the mainland". Moctezuma was killed, although the sources do not agree on who killed him. According to one account, when Moctezuma, now seen by the population as a mere puppet of the invading Spaniards, attempted to calm the outraged populace, he was killed by a projectile. According to an indigenous account, the Spanish killed Moctezuma.

The Spanish, Tlaxcalans and reinforcements returned a year later on 13 August 1521 to a civilization that had been weakened by famine and smallpox. This made it easier to conquer the remaining Aztecs. The Spaniards' victory is attributed to their help from indigenous allies, technology, and the Aztec empire's vulnerability due to the smallpox spread. As a result, the Aztec's tactics countering the Spaniard's advanced technology is understated. According to Hassig, "It is true that cannons, guns, crossbows, steel blades, horses and war dogs were advanced on the Aztecs' weaponry. But the advantage these gave a few hundred Spanish soldiers was not overwhelming." In the words of Restall, "Spanish weapons were useful for breaking the offensive lines of waves of indigenous warriors, but this was no formula for conquest ... rather, it was a formula for survival, until Spanish and indigenous reinforcements arrived." The integration of the indigenous allies, essentially, those from Tlaxcala and Texcoco, into the Spanish army played a crucial role in the conquest, yet other factors paved the path for the Spaniards' success. For instance, the Spaniards' timing of entry, the compelling ideologies of both groups, and the Spanish unfamiliarity with the Aztec Empire. Therefore, the Spaniards lacked a sense of danger and power structure within the empire. "A direct attack on a city as mighty as Tenochtitlan was unlikely and unexpected" from the enemy empires. As well, it was very uncommon that an attacking army would come unannounced. In addition, aside from the infantry and the allies' role in the Spanish conquest, cavalry was the "arm of decision in the conquest" and "the key ingredient in the Spanish forces".

Many of those on the Cortés expedition of 1519 had never seen combat before, including Cortés. A whole generation of Spaniards later participated in expeditions in the Caribbean and Tierra Firme (Central America), learning strategy and tactics of successful enterprises. The Spanish conquest of Mexico had antecedents with established practices.^[19]

The fall of the Aztec Empire was the key event in the formation of the [Spanish Empire](#) overseas, with [New Spain](#), which later became [Mexico](#).

Timeline

- 1428 – Creation of the Triple Alliance of Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan
- 1492–93 – Columbus reaches the Caribbean; start of permanent Spanish settlements
- 1493–1515 – Spanish exploration, conquest, enslavement, and settlement in the Caribbean and the [Spanish Main](#)
- 1502 – Moctezuma II elected *huey tlatoani*, emperor [literally: "Great Speaker"] of the Aztec Triple Alliance
- 1503–09 – Moctezuma's coronation conquests

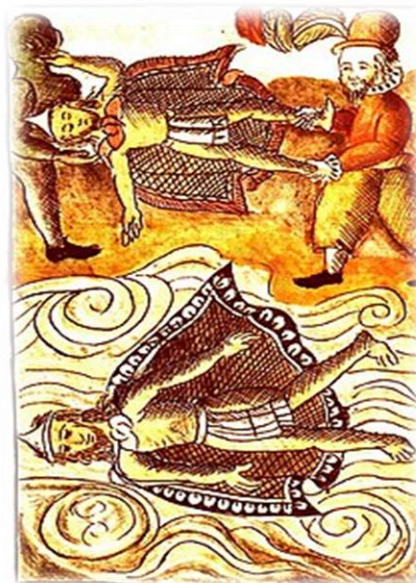
- 1504 – Hernan Cortés arrives in the Caribbean
- 1511– Spanish viceroy in the Caribbean appoints [Diego Velázquez](#) to conquer and govern Cuba
- 1510~ Francisco Vazquez de Coronado was born
- 1515 – Texcocan monarch [Nezahualpilli](#) dies; Cacamatzin succeeds to the throne; the rebellion of [Ixtilxochitl](#)
- 1517 – [Expedition of Francisco Hernández de Córdoba](#) to the Yucatán coast
- 1517- City of [Cholollan](#) secedes from Tlaxcalteca Alliance, becomes a tributary state of the Aztec Triple Alliance
- 1518 – Expedition of [Juan de Grijalva](#) to the Yucatán and Gulf coasts; appointment of Cortés to lead a third exploratory expedition

1519



Cortés and his counselor, the Nahuatl woman [La Malinche](#), meet Moctezuma in Tenochtitlan, 8 November 1519

- 10 February – Cortés expedition leaves Cuba, taking Hernández de Córdoba's route. In the process, Cortés ignores Velásquez's cancellation of the expedition
- Early 1519 – [Gerónimo de Aguilar](#), shipwrecked Spaniard, bilingual in Yoko Ochoko, joins Cortés



The death of Moctezuma, depicted in the [Florentine Codex](#)

- 24 March – Leaders of Potoncan sue Spaniards for peace and gift the Spaniards, 20 slave women. One of the enslaved Nahua woman (known as La Malinche, Doña Marina, Malintze, and Malintzin), is multilingual and will serve as one of the main translators for the expedition.
- 21 April – Expedition lands in the Gulf coast near San Juan de Ullúa
- Early June – Cortés establishes the colony of Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz and relocates the company to a beach near the settlement of Quiahuiztlan. Afterward, the Spaniards travel to Cempoala and formalize an alliance with [Xicomecoatl](#) (also known as the Fat Chief and [Cacique Gordo](#)), the leader of Cempoala. At this time, Cempoala is the capital of the Totonac confederacy.
- July/August – Cortés' soldiers desecrate Cempoala
- 16 August – Spaniards and Totonac allies embark on march toward the Valley of Tenochtitlan, passing Citlatapetl and many other notable geographic landmarks like Cofre de Perote
- 31 August – Tlaxcalteca attack Spaniards after entering the territory of Tlaxcallan. They succeed in killing two horsemen.
- September – Tlaxcalteca assault the Spanish camp by day, and the Spanish respond by raiding unarmed Tlaxcalteca towns and villages by night. Tlaxcallan brokers a peace after 18 punishing days of war, by which point the Spaniards had lost half their cavalry and 1/5 their men.
- October – March to [Cholula](#). Conquistadors massacre unarmed Cholulans, then Spanish-Tlaxcala combine forces to sack Cholollan, and replace Cholulan political leadership with Tlaxcallan-favoring nobles. The massacre broke out for disputed reasons, perhaps to quash an impending Cholulan attack or to fulfill a Tlaxcalteca plan to both exact revenge on Cholollan for its secession and to test their new Spanish allies.
- **8 November 1519 – Meeting of Cortés and Moctezuma**

1520



Smallpox depicted in Book XII on the conquest of Mexico in the Florentine Codex

- April or May – [Pánfilo de Narváez](#) arrives on the Gulf coast, sent by Governor Velázquez to rein in Cortés
- Mid-May – [Pedro de Alvarado](#) [massacres Aztec elites](#) celebrating the Festival of Toxcatl
- Late May – Cortés forces attack Narváez's forces at Cempoala; incorporation of those Spaniards into Cortés's forces
- 24 June – Spanish forces return to Tenochtitlan

- Late June – Uprising in Tenochtitlan; the death of Moctezuma in unclear circumstances, perhaps killed by the Spaniards, perhaps by his own people; deaths of other leaders of the Triple Alliance
- **30 June – "[La Noche Triste](#)"** – Evacuation of Spanish-Tlaxcalteca allied forces from Tenochtitlan; deaths of perhaps 1,000 Spaniards and 1,000 Tlaxcalans
- 9 or 10 July – [Battle of Otumba](#), Aztec forces attack the Spanish-Tlaxcalteca forces at Otumba
- 11 or 12 July – Retreat to Tlaxcala
- 1 August – Spanish punitive expedition in Tepeaca in reprisal for the murder of Spaniards by its inhabitants.
- Mid-September – Coronation of [Cuitlahuac](#) as Moctezuma's successor
- **Mid-October to mid-December – Smallpox epidemic**; death of Cuitlahuac on 4 December, perhaps of smallpox
- Late December – Spanish-Tlaxcaltec forces return to the Valley of Mexico; join with Texcoca forces of Ixtlilxochitl

1521



The Capture of Cuauhtemoc, 17th century, oil on canvas.

- Late January – Cuauhtemoc elected *huey tlatoani* of Tenochtitlan
- February – Combined Spanish-Tlaxcalteca-Texcoca forces attack Xaltocan and Tlacopan; Texcoco becomes the base of operations for the campaign against Tenochtitlan
- Early April – Attacks against Yautepec and Cuernavaca, following by sacking
- Mid-April – Combined forces defeated by the Xochimilcans, Tenochtitlan's ally
- **Late April – Construction of 13 shallow-bottomed brigantines** by Tlaxcalteca laborers under Spanish supervision; mounted with cannon; launched into Lake Texcoco, allowing Spanish control of the inland sea
- 10 May – Start of the siege of Tenochtitlan; potable water from Chapultepec cut off
- 30 June – Defeat of Spanish-Tlaxcalteca forces on a causeway; capture and ritual sacrifice of the Spaniards and their horses in Tenochtitlan
- July – Spanish ships land at Veracruz with large numbers of Spaniards, munitions, and horses
- 20–25 July – Battle for Tenochtitlan
- 1 August – Spanish-Tlaxcalan-Texcocan forces enter the Plaza Mayor; last stand of the Aztec defenders

- **13 August – Surrender of Aztec defenders; capture of Cuauhtemoc**
- 13–17 August – Wholesale sacking and violence against the survivors in Tenochtitlan

1522

- October – [Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor](#) names Cortés captain-general of [New Spain](#), the Spanish name for central Mexico.
- November – Death of Cortés's wife, Catalina Suárez, in Coyoacan, where Cortés was resident while the new capital [Mexico City](#) was constructed on the ruins of Tenochtitlan
- Cortés's Second Letter to the crown is published in Seville, Spain

1524

- Arrival of the [first twelve Franciscan missionaries](#) to Mexico, beginning of the "spiritual conquest" to convert the indigenous populations to Christianity
- Conqueror [Cristóbal de Olid](#)'s expedition to Honduras; renounces Cortés' authority; Cortés expedition to Honduras with the captive Cuauhtemoc

1525

- February – execution of the three rulers of the former Triple Alliance, including Cuauhtemoc
- Don Juan Velázquez Tlacotzin, former "viceroy" (*cihuacoatl*) appointed governor of the indigenous sector of Mexico City

1525–30

- [Spanish conquest of Guatemala](#)

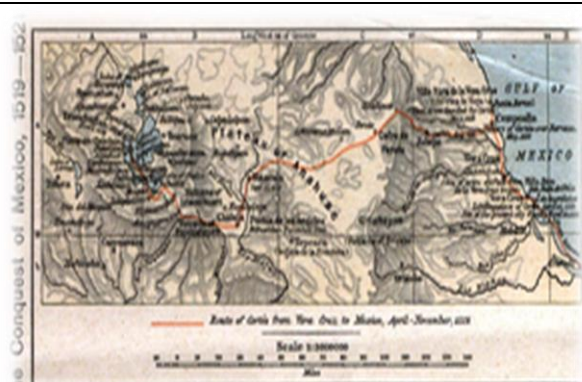
1527–1547

- [Spanish conquest of Chiapas](#)

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Hernán Cortés in his later years; his coat of arms on the upper right corner (16th century).



Map depicting Cortés' conquest route



Codex Azcatitlan depicting the Spanish-Tlaxcalan army, with Cortés and La Malinche, along with an African slave in front the meeting with Moctezuma.



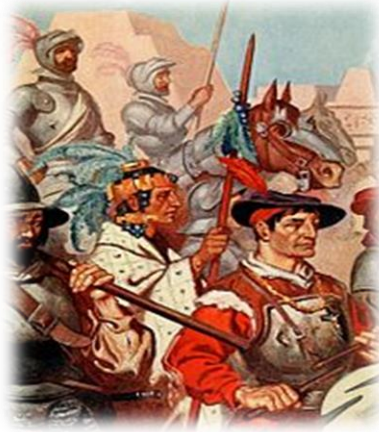
**Cortés scuttling fleet off
Veracruz coast**



Meeting of Cortés and Xicotencatl



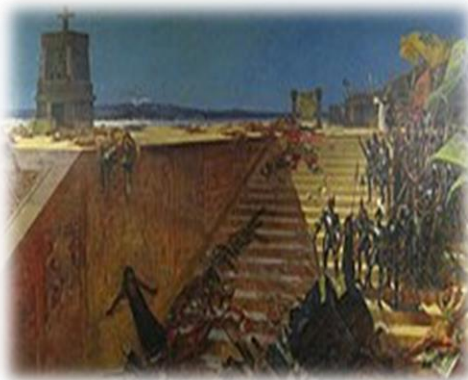
**"Motecuhzuma receives Cortés. Mexican dances in the lake." by Juan González
and Miguel González. 1698**



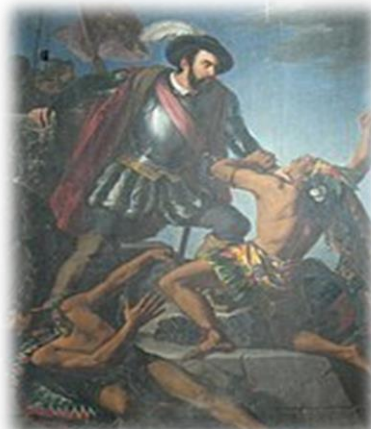
Conquistadors and their Tlaxcalan allies enter Tenochtitlan



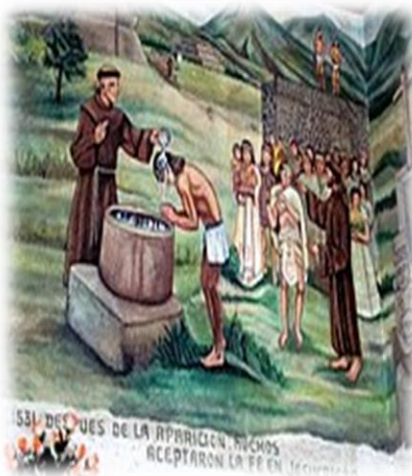
La Noche Triste depicted in the 17th century



"The Last Days of Tenochtitlan, Conquest of Mexico by Cortez", a 19th-century painting by William de Leftwich Dodge.



Hernan Cortés fight with two Aztecs.



Evangelization of Mexico



Nuño de Guzmán, a rival of Cortés, led Spanish soldiers with Tlaxcalan allies in the conquest of Michoacan.



Meeting place of Moctezuma and Hernán Cortés, at Calzada de Tlalpan, Mexico City, the road which connects the southernmost part of the city with the central plaza. This plaque commemorating the meeting is located at the eastern wall of the Church of Jesus the Nazarene [es], in Cuauhtémoc borough



Moctezuma II receiving the Huexotzinca embassy requesting for aid against the Tlaxcalans. Durán Codex



Baptism of Ixtlilxochitl II, by José Vivar y Valderrama

Kindly visit these Web Links to see the Videos:

[A] Montezuma II | Biography, Aztec King Rule & Death

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/video/who-was-king-montezuma-ii-biography-facts-aztec-history.html> [04:57]

[B] Montezuma II

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQeTskYgv3U> [04:59]

[C] Montezuma II: The End of the Aztec Empire

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6QDuXUON7k [27:41]

The Imprisonment of Moctezuma II

<https://www.tota.world/article/278/>

From *The Memoirs of the Conquistador Bernal Diaz del Castillo*,
published in 1552 and translated by John Ingram Lockhart.

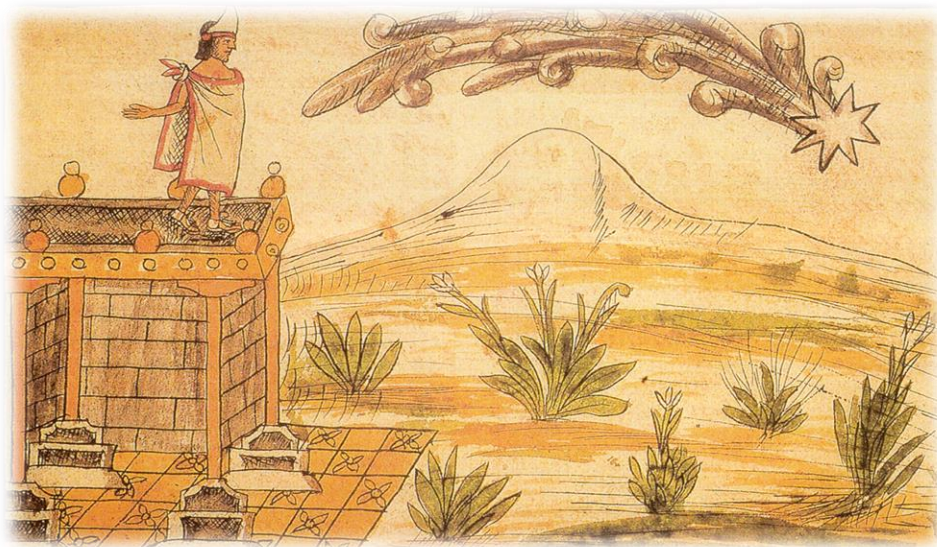
Chapter XCV

Of the imprisonment of Motecusuma, and what further happened.

After we had come to the determination of seizing the person of Motecusuma, and had been on our knees the whole night in prayer, to supplicate the Almighty's assistance in this bold attempt, and that it might redound to the glory of his holy religion, we made the necessary arrangements when morning came for that purpose.

Every one received orders to be ready to march out at a moment's notice, and the horses were to be kept saddled. It is not necessary for me to repeat here that our arms were always in readiness; for they were never out of our hands either day or night; while our alpagates, the only covering we had to our feet, were never taken off.

Our general now sallied forth, accompanied by our five chief officers, Alvarado, Sandoval, Lugo, Leon, and Avila; besides our interpreters, Marina and Aguilar. Cortes and his officers were completely armed; yet this would not appear strange to Motecusuma, as he had never seen them otherwise whenever they paid him a visit. Cortes, as on the former occasion, sent some one before him to announce his approach, that Motecusuma might not perceive any change in our behaviour, and feel no uneasiness at our unexpected visit. His conscience, however, was not altogether easy, on account of the affair which had taken place at Almeria, and he had a misgiving that it would bring down evil upon him. Yet he sent word that our visit would be agreeable to him.



A page from the Codex Duran, depicting Moctezuma II, published c. 1581.

After Cortes had entered his apartment, and the usual compliments had been passed, he thus addressed Motecusuma: "I am greatly astonished that a prince of such power, who styles himself our friend, should have commanded his troops, which lie on the coast near Tuzapan, to take up arms against my Spanish troops, and presume to demand a certain number of men and women for the sacrifices from those townships which have put themselves under the protection of our emperor. But this is not all; they have plundered those places, and even killed one of my brothers, and a horse."

Cortes very prudently omitted to mention the death of Escalante and the six others; for Motecusuma at that time knew as little of that as his generals who had commanded on the occasion.

"How very differently we acted on our side!" continued Cortes. "I had put implicit reliance in your friendship, and desired my officers in every way to comply with your wishes. You, on the contrary, have commanded your officers the very opposite. You once likewise sent a large body of troops to Cholulla to destroy us all there. At that time, from the friendship I bore you, I would not notice to you that I was aware of that. At the present moment your generals have the audacity to plot in secret to put us all to death. However, notwithstanding all this treachery, I will refrain from making war upon you, which would only end in the total destruction of this city; but in order that peace may be maintained between us, you must make a small sacrifice, which is, to follow us quietly into our quarters, and take up your abode there. There you will receive the same attention, and be treated with the same

respect as if you were in your own palace. But if you make any alarm now, or call out to your attendants, you are a dead man; and it is for this reason only that I have this time brought these officers with me."

Motecusuma was seized with such sudden terror at these words, that he remained speechless for some time. At length, however, he took courage, and declared he had never given any one orders to take up arms against us. He would that instant send for his generals, and learn from them the truth of the whole matter, and give exemplary punishment. For this purpose, he loosened the seal and mark of Huitzilopochtli, which he always wore around his wrist. This he only did when he issued orders of the first importance, and that those who had the seal might be immediately obeyed. He was quite astonished, he said, we should presume to take him prisoner, and lead him away out of his palace against his wishes. No one had a right to demand that of him, he added; and altogether he felt no inclination to comply with our request.

Cortes, in answer to this, gave him very good reasons for our having come to this determination; but Motecusuma continually brought in stronger reasons why he should not comply; and was resolved not to leave his palace.

As this dispute had now lasted above half an hour, our officers began to lose all patience, and said to Cortes with great warmth, "What is the use of throwing away so many words? He must either quietly follow us, or we will cut him down at once. Be so good as to tell him this; for on this depends the safety of our lives. We must show determination, or we are inevitably lost."

These words were uttered by Juan Velasquez in a loud and harsh tone of voice. When, therefore, Motecusuma heard this, and perceived the dark looks of the officers, he asked Marina what the man had said who spoke so loud.

Marina, who was uncommonly shrewd, and well knew how to help us out with a good answer, said, "Great monarch, if I may be allowed to give you advice, make no further difficulties, but immediately follow them to their quarters. I am confident they will pay you every respect, and treat you as becomes a powerful monarch. But if you continue to refuse, they will cut you down on the spot."

Motecusuma then turned to Cortes, and said: "Malinche, since then you repose no trust in me, take my son and my two legitimate daughters as hostages; only do not disgrace me, by demanding my person. What will the grandees of my empire say, if they see me taken prisoner?"

Cortes, however, said that his own person would be the only guarantee of our safety, and that there was no other means of quieting our fears. At last Motecusuma, after a good deal of altercation, made up his mind to go quietly with us.

As soon as he had declared this his intention, our officers showed him every possible civility, and hoped that he would excuse the grief they had occasioned him, and desired him to acquaint his generals and his body-guard that he had chosen, of his own free will, to take up his abode in our quarters; and also upon the advice of Huitzilopochtli and his papas, who considered it necessary for his health, and for the safety of his life.

His rich and splendid sedan was then brought in, which he commonly used when he left his palace with his whole suite, and he followed us to our quarters, where we took every precaution to secure his person. Every one of us strove hardest to make him happy, and procured him every entertainment we could think of, to make his confinement as pleasant as we could.

Shortly afterwards all the Mexican grandees, with his nephew, called upon him, to inquire the reason of his imprisonment, and ask him if they should commence hostilities against us? But Motecusuma told them he wished to do himself the pleasure of passing a few days with us, and that this change of abode was of his own free choice. He would make his wishes known to them as soon as he found reason to complain. They might allay their fears, and keep the metropolis quiet, and not trouble themselves any further about him. The determination he had thus taken was fully consented to by Huitzilopochtli, as many priests, who had purposely consulted him, had admitted.

These are the true circumstances relative to the imprisonment of Motecusuma. He was always surrounded by the whole of his household, and had all his wives with him, and continued to bathe himself daily, as he had been accustomed to, in his own palace. He was likewise always attended by twenty of his generals and counsellors, nor did he show the least signs of grief on account of his confinement. Disputes from the

most distant parts were laid before him, as usual, for his decision; the tribute was collected, and he continued to attend to the most important affairs of state as before.

His subjects paid the same veneration to his person, and the most distinguished princes who waited on him, or came upon business, always took off their fine garments, to put on a meaner dress of nequen cloth, and came so, barefoot, into his presence. Neither did they enter at the principal gate, but sought for some side door, and approached with eyes downcast, and made three prostrations, and pronounced the words Lord, my lord, great lord! They then acquainted him with their business, by means of pictures drawn on nequen cloth; and made use of thin sticks, with which they pointed to the different objects, to explain what they wanted, or the nature of the law-suit they came about.

Motecusuma had constantly two old distinguished caziques at his side, who, as judges, gave their opinion in every case, after due deliberation; and the monarch then, in few words, gave his decision. The parties then, without uttering a syllable, or turning their backs to him, left the apartment with three deep bows; and on arriving outside, they again put on their fine garments, and took a stroll in the metropolis.

After some time had elapsed, the generals who had fought against Escalante were brought in prisoners to the monarch. What he told them on this occasion I do not know; but he sent them to Cortes to pronounce judgment on them himself. These unfortunate men confessed they had merely acted up to the commands of their monarch, which was, to levy the tribute by force of arms; and if the teules should protect the rebels, to attack them also, and put them to the sword.

Cortes acquainted Motecusuma with what these men had said, but declared that the monarch had sufficiently exculpated himself from any guilt in the affair. According to the laws of our emperor, that man suffered death who had killed another, whether he deserved killing or not; however, his love for Motecusuma was so great, that he would rather take the responsibility of this matter upon himself than allow it to rest with him; but as he still seemed anxious about it, our general made no further ceremony with these Mexicans, but sentenced them to death, and they were burnt alive in front of Motecusuma's palace.

And that no impediment might be thrown in the way while these sentences were being put into execution, Cortes ordered chains to be

put on Motecusuma. At first he certainly did not approve of this at all, but, in the end, quietly submitted, and grew even the more tractable afterwards. When the executions had taken place, Cortes approached him, with five of our officers, and himself took off his chains again, with the assurance that he loved him more than a brother. He likewise told him, however great a monarch he might be at present, that additional countries should be annexed to his empire, and he was at liberty to visit any of his other palaces whenever he felt inclined.

At these words Motecusuma became affected, and big tears rolled down his cheeks; and though he felt that all was mere empty sound he had heard, he nevertheless thanked Cortes for his kindness, adding, that at present he felt no inclination to go any where.

His nephews, relations, and grandees daily stormed him with petitions to allow them to make war upon us, and release him from confinement. And, indeed, it required all his persuasion to prevent them from rising up in arms immediately. If he were once, said they, outside of our quarters, they would take forcible possession of his person. The whole of the inhabitants in his metropolis would rise up in arms, and if then he would not join them, they would care little about him, and elect a new king. Motecusuma, however, succeeded in silencing them by the assurance that Huitzilopochtli had himself advised him to bear with his confinement.

To account for Motecusuma thus quietly submitting to his confinement, I must here remark that Cortes ordered Aguilar to acquaint him secretly that if even our general himself gave his consent to his liberation, it would be of no avail, as all our officers and soldiers would oppose it. Cortes feigned to be unconscious of all this, and embraced the monarch under the assurances of sincere friendship. He likewise gave him his page Orteguilla, who had already gained some knowledge of the Mexican language, the monarch having expressed a wish to have a Spanish attendant. This young man was of the greatest utility both to Motecusuma and ourselves, the monarch learning many things from him relating to Spain, and we again a good deal of the discourses which passed between the former and his generals: he was in every way attentive to the monarch, who became exceedingly fond of him.

On the whole, Motecusuma appeared perfectly content with the civilities we showed him, and he continually felt greater delight in our company; for whenever any one of us passed by him, he immediately

entered into discourse with us: we were quite at our ease with him, even when Cortes was present, and took off our helmets in his presence, which, as well as our weapons, we never laid aside; and the monarch always treated us with great respect.

The severe example which Cortes had made of the Mexican generals had had its full effect. The news thereof ran like wildfire through the whole of New Spain; the tribes along the coast, by whom our troops of Vera Cruz had been defeated, were seized with terror, and again offered their services to the garrison there.

I must now beg the kind reader to pause a moment upon the heroic deeds we performed, and consider their magnitude! First of all, we destroy all our vessels, and thereby cut off all hopes of escaping from this country. We then venture to march into this strong city, though we were warned against it on all sides, and assured we should merely be allowed a peaceable entrance to be the more easily destroyed. We then have the audacity to imprison the monarch of this vast empire, the powerful Motecusuma, in his own metropolis, in his very palace, amidst his numerous troops. At last, we even fearlessly burn some of his generals to death in front of his own palace, and throw the monarch himself in chains while this was being executed!

Even now, in my old age, the heroic deeds we then accomplished come vividly to my memory. I imagine I see all passing before me now, but must also acknowledge that, although we had our hands full, we were aided by Divine Providence. When again on earth will be found such a handful of soldiers, in all scarcely 550, who would dare to penetrate, at a distance of above 6000 miles from their native country, into the heart of such a strong city, larger than Venice, take its very monarch prisoner, and execute his generals in his very presence? These things, indeed, ought to be deeply pondered on, and not mentioned so briefly as I here have done! But it is time I should continue my history.

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